No. W.S. 1,163

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,163

Witness

Patrick MacCarthy, Lahakineen, Mourne Abbey, Co. Cork.

Identity.

Adjutant Blarney Battalion;
" Mallow Battalion;
O/C. Mallow Battalion Cork II Brigade.

Subject.

Mourne Abbey Company Irish Volunteers, Co. Cork, 1916-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2



BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

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STATEMENT BY

PATRICK MCCARTHY, LAHAKINEEN, MOURNE ABBEY, CO. CORK.

I was born in January, 1886 at Lahakineen, Mourne Abbey, where I now reside. My parents were farmers. I was one of a family of four brothers and one sister all of whom were actively associated with the fight for freedom. Our home was, at all times, available to men "on the run" and to all those associated with the fight.

I have already made a joint statement with Messrs. Cornelius O'Regan and Liam Jones in respect of the period to Easter Week, 1916. I think that the joint statement concluded with a report on the happenings on Easter Sunday 1916 when our Company (Mourne Abbey) of the Irish Volunteers paraded at Beeing Cross.

During the remainder of Easter Week all members stood to arms awaiting instructions and during this period were engaged in loading all shotgun cartridges available with buck-shot. Easter week passed and there were no further instructions.

Some time towards the end of the following week a meeting of all the Volunteers in the Mourne Abbey Company was held at Green Hill. Liam Jones who was Company O.C. together with Patrick Curtin (one of the Committee who controlled the Irish Volunteers) appealed to the members to surrender their arms to the Catholic Curate (Fr. Sheedy). The appeal was received with mixed feelings and the Analeentha section of the Company to which I belonged refused to surrender any arms and withdrew from the meeting.

Following the withdrawal all members of the

Analeentha section - to the number of about 40 - continued to

carry on drilling and all activities as usual but not in

daylight as prior to Easter week. Parades were held at least

once a week throughout the remainder of 1916 and into early 1917. Amongst those who were members of the unit at this time were: Jerome Buckley, Paddy McCarthy (witness), Sean McCarthy and Donal McCarthy (his brothers) John Cronin, Jeremiah Cronin, Tim Cronin, Paddy Donovan, Pad Donoghue, Dan Looney. Officers for the unit were not elected at this stage but I usually took charge of the parades.

Early in 1917 the area was visited by Sean Sullivan from Cork City. He was "on the run" at this time and he set up his H.Q. in my home. While there he was visited regularly by representatives from Cork City and other centres throughout the country. About this time I was invited by Sean Sullivan to join the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.) I was sworn in by him and shortly afterwards I was appointed Head Centre for Ahadillane, Mourne Abbey and Mallow Circles by Sean Hegarty. Naturally the membership of this organisation was confined to selected individuals. Amongst those sworn in by me were: Jerome Buckley, Paddy Buckley, Owen Harold, Paddy Waters, Ned Waters, Liam Jones, Jerh. Cronin. There were in addition a number of others whose names I cannot now recollect.

On the anniversary of Easter Week in 1917 our unit decided to fly the Tricolour from two of the highest points in the area, viz. Mourne Abbey Castle and a very high tree in Analeentha. The Tricolours were fixed in position during the night and when they were seen by the R.I.C. arrangements were made by the latter to have them removed. In order to remove the flag, which was flying

from the tree, Sergt. Clarke and Constable Dempsey of the R.I.C. spent several hours working hard at sawing down the tree. They were watched by a large crowd including all volunteers in the district. When the tree fell the flag was seized by the Volunteers so the R.I.C. had laboured in vain. The flag on Mourne Abbey Castle was removed by Constable Dwyer, R.I.C. Mallow, but it was replaced by another flag that night. The approach to the position in which the new flag was fixed was blocked by drawing a blackthorn bush through an old chimney in the Castle wall. This flag was never removed and it remained in position until blown to shreds by the gales.

Several members of the Company, who prevented the R.I.C. from seizing the flag at Analeentha, were prosecuted. They were tried before Mr. Hardy R.M. (Resident Magistrate) at Mallow. They were defended by Joe Fitzgerald, Solicitor. The Crown Solicitor was Anthony Carroll, Fermoy. occasion of the trial the volunteers paraded in Mallow and there was a baton charge by the R.I.C. to break up the parade. Several volunteers and a number of the R.I.C. were injured during the fracas. These occurrences, on the occasion of the trial, took place about July, 1917 and drew the attention of the people to the activities of the Volunteers. result there was a revival of the National Spirit in the district and also an increase in the Volunteer strength. Amongst those charged in connection with the obstruction of the R.I.C. at Analeentha were, I think: Mick Crean, Jerh. Cronin, John Buckley and Sean McCarthy.

The political wing of the movement - Sinn Féin - was being organised throughout the area at this time and all members of the Volunteers took an active part in this work.

As a matter of fact I would say that in the early stages the

Sinn Féin party was mainly composed of volunteers and members of their families. The volunteers were also active in the Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Association and other National Organisations.

When drilling and parades in public were resumed in September, 1917, the Mourne Abbey Company paraded and were drilled in public. All the old activities of the Company were resumed as before 1916. At this time the R.I.C. were accompanying parades of the Volunteers throughout the country and noting the names of the participants. The company was, at this time, an independent unit of Cork Brigade. The Company Officers were:-

O.C. - Liam Jones

1st Lieut. - Paddy McCarthy.

Early in 1918 Mourne Abbey Company became a unit of the 6th Battalion (Blarney) Cork Brigade. The officers of this battalion were:-

O.C - "Pa" Twomey, Kilmona

Vice O/C. - Thos. J. Golden, Gurranes.

Adjt. - Paddy McCarthy, Mourne Abbey (witness)

.Q.M. - Dick O'Mahoney, Berrings.

The Companies in the battalion were Blarney, Donoughmore, Berrings, Mourne Abbey, Courtbrack, Kilmona.

When Conscription was threatened in the Spring of 1918 there was a considerable increase in the membership of the Volunteers. The strength of Mourne Abbey Company must now have reached about 120: All arms - mainly shot guns - held in the area had already been collected and we had in addition, a few rifles. My home, at this period, was like an armed camp as there was always a crowd there engaged in the loading

of cartridges, the making of buckshot and hand grenades.

The latter were made by filling paint tins or cocoa tins large and small - with a mixture of cement and scrap metal.

Two quarter inch bolts were set in the cement to enable a
cover to be bolted on. A space was available in the centre
for a stick of gelignite which could be detonated and fused the fuse protruding through a hole in the centre of the cover.

The volunteers who were mainly engaged on this work were
Paddy Buckley, Jerome Buckley, Owen Harold as well as the
members of my own family - my brothers Sean and Donal. The
general body of the volunteers in the area were engaged in
watching and reporting on the movements of the enemy.

It was about this time (I think) that Liam Jones (Company O/C. Mourne Abbey) was arrested for 'illegal drilling! He was sentenced to a term of imprisonment and was sent to Belfast Gaol.

When the Conscription scare had passed there was a gradual reduction in the strength of the Mourne Abbey Company until the normal strength of about 80 was reached.

There was very little activity on the political side in this area in connection with the General Election in December 1918, as there was no contest. About 40 members of the Mourne Abbey Company travelled to Waterford City to do protection duty.

When Cork II. Brigade was established on January 6th 1919, Mourne Abbey Company was transferred to the 2nd Battalion (Mallow) of the new brigade. The first officers of this battalion were:-

O/C. - Liam Jones

Vice O/C. - Jeremiah Buckley

Adjt. - Paddy McCarthy (witness)

Q.M. - Tadg Looney.

The Companies in the Battalion were: - Mallow, Mourne Abbey, Lombardstown, Ballyclough, Ahadillane and Dromahane.

There were seven battalions in the new brigade as follows:- Fermoy (lst); Mallow (2nd); Castletownroche (3rd) Charleville (4th); Newmarket (5th), Kanturk (6th); and Millstreet (7th).

The first officers of Cork II. Brigade were:-

O/C. - Liam Lynch, Fermoy

Vice O/C. - Dan Hegarty, Mallow.

Adjt. - Tom Barry, Glanworth (Castletownroche Battn.)

Q.M. - George Power, Fermoy.

Shortly after these appointments had been made George Power and Tom Barry interchanged positions and the final set up was:

Adjt. - George Power, Fermoy

Q.M. - Tom Barry, Glanworth

Early in 1919 (February I think) a strong force of R.I.C. from Cork raided my home. The raiding party was in charge of District Inspector Swanzy. This raid arose as a result of the capture of some dispatches in a raid on a house in Mallow. The raid on my home, however, failed to reveal anything of interest to the enemy.

Following the raid on a party of British Military at the Wesleyan Church in Fermoy on September 7th, 1919, the O/C. Mallow Company (Owen Harold) who took part in the raid went "on the run". He billeted at my home and was engaged in organising intelligence work throughout the battalion area. On one occasion he was present in my home during the course of a raid by military and R.I.C. but he was not identified. This was about the end of October, 1919.

During the early portion of 1920 the usual drills and parades took place. The training was at this stage becoming more advanced. Scouting work received particular attention as did the use of cover. Occasionally at week-ends selected members from the various companies in the battalion got an opportunity for some target practice with .22 rifle and sometimes Lee Enfield rifle fitted with Morris tube.

The General Order for the destruction of evacuated R.I.C. posts at Easter, 1920 saw all members of the Company as well as a number of men from Mallow engaged in the destruction of Blackrock R.I.C. barracks.

The next occasion on which there was any general activity by the members of the Unit arose out of raids on the house of Hugh and Daniel O'Brien at Inchmay. These brothers were wanted in connection with a raid on one of the banks in Millstreet in which £18,000 (I think) was taken. occasions I was a member of the raiding party but the O'Brien brothers were not available. They were captured later, in May, 1920, by members of the Millstreet Battalion. All the prisoners (Hugh, Dan and Liam O'Brien, - Carmody, Buckleys (2), - Murphy and - Connors or O'Connor) were held in various houses in the Mourne Abbey area over a period of weeks while arrangements were being made for their trial and later for their deportation. Some were deported to Great Britain and others to Canada. I remember that on two occasions I escorted four men to Rosslare where they boarded When the boat had sailed I returned to the the Mail boat. train and slept in a carriage in a railway siding until the train was due to return to Mallow next morning. The usual procedure in cases of this nature in this area was to leave Mourne Abbey Railway Station by the mid-afternoon train with my prisoners

and travel to Lismore where we detrained to await the Rosslare Express (it did not stop at Mourne Abbey) on which we travelled to Rosslare and the boat.

About the end of May or early in June 1920 the following appointments were made to the Battalion Staff by Liam Lynch (Brigade O/C):-

O/C. - Paddy McCarthy (witness) Mourne Abbey.

Vice O/C - Owen Harold Mallow

Adjt. - Tadh Looney Mourne Abbey

Q.M. - Mick Nagle do.

Owen Harold replaced Jerh. Buckley who had been appointed Brigade Q.M.

When General Lucas (O/C. British Forces at Fermoy) was captured by Liam Lynch, Sean Moylan, Paddy Clancy and George Power at Kilbarry (near Fermoy) on June 28th, 1920, he was taken to this district. The Abbey Stores at Mourne Abbey were at the time Brigade H.Q. With Paddy Buckley, Batt. Walsh and Jerh. Buckley, I was at the Stores awaiting the arrival of the prisoner and escort. Liam Lynch came into the Stores and gave us an account of the capture of the prisoner and the subsequent events. He then left the Stores accompanied by Jerh. Buckley who escorted himself and the other members of the party to O'Connell's, Lackindarra, Lombardstown where General Lucas was held prisoner for some days. He was moved to other houses in the area (I think) and was later transferred to East Clare Brigade.

About this time I took part with several members of the Mallow Company in a raid on the Cork-Dublin mail train. We removed the mails to a waiting motor car at Two Pot House and they were then taken to Denis Curtins,

Ballysimon, Dromahane. The car was driven by Leo O'Callaghan. The mails were consored by the Brigade and Battalion Staffs and were later returned to Dromahane Post Office.

On the morning of 12th August, 1920, I received word from Jerh. Buckley (Brigade Q.M.) to be ready to accompany Liam Lynch to Cork. Liam Lynch arrived at my home shortly afterwards and we left immediately for Cork by motor car. On our way to Cork Liam explained to me that he had received a dispatch from Dublin which was obviously for Cork I. Brigade. He said that he was anxious to meet Terry McSwiney who was O/C. Cork I. Brigade. When we arrived in the city we went to Concubhair Toomey's, Dublin Hill where He instructed me to proceed into the City and I left Liam. I called on Joe O'Connor at to contact Terry MacSwiney. "The Queen's Old Castle" - a big drapery shop - in Grand Joe left his job and accompanied me to the Mental Parade. Hospital but we found that Terry MacSwiney was not there. We eventually found him at Scoil Ita (his sister's school) and he arranged to meet Liam Lynch at the City Hall at 7 p.m. or 7.30 p.m. (I m not sure of the exact time). I then returned to Liam Lynch and we both walked into the centre of the city from Dublin Hill. As we were walking along Liam said on one occasion "Keep out of step Pat". Although it was not too easy to do so we managed to stroll along without appearing to be "military minded". We went to the City Hall at the appointed time and found a number of other I.R.A. officers there including: Terry MacSwiney, Sean Hegarty, Joe O'Connor, Dan O'Donovan ("Sando") and Mick Leahy. had already assembled to hold a Brigade Council Meeting for Cork I. Brigade as far as I can recollect. Liam accompanied the other officers into a room while, although invited to go with them, I decided to remain in the corridor. After some

time Liam came out and said "We are not going home to-night", I said "Why"? and he replied "We are taking on a job." I then reminded him that we did not have arms and he said: "Cork I. will arm us". Liam then re-entered the meeting In a short time the alarm was raised by Corporation room. officials that the City Hall was being surrounded. MacSwiney. Liam Lynch and the other officers then left the room and joined me in the corridor. The whole party moved along several corridors until we were looking out on the Cornmarket end of the building. We then saw that the military had taken up positions in the Cornmarket so all avenues of escape were closed. Each member of the party then set about destroying any doubtful documents in their Eventually the raiding party reached us and we possession. were rounded up.

We were taken in the waiting lorries to the Military Detention Barracks where we were held until next day when we were removed to Cork Gaol. We immediately went on hunger strike and with the exception of Terry MacSwiney, who was taken away after two or three days and tried by courtmartial, we were all released on, I think, August 16th 1920. We remained in Cork that night with some friends.

When we got the "Cork Examiner" next morning we found that Paddy Clancy (Vice Brigadier, Cork II. Brigade) and Sean O'Connell (Kanturk Battalion) had been killed in the Kanturk Battalion area on the 16th. Liam immediately arranged to leave the city and to return to his own brigade area. We travelled by motor car to Brigade H.Q. at Mourne Abbey and Liam left immediately to attend the funeral of his Vice Brigadier (Paddy Clancy) and Sean O'Connell (O/C.

Kanturk Battalion). He was accompanied to the funeral by Jerh. Buckley (Brigade Q.M.).

Arrangements to form a Brigade Flying Column were being made about the time of Liam Lynch's arrest. The shooting of the Vice-Brigadier and Seán O'Connell delayed this scheme further and it was not until early September, 1920 that the column was assembled in my battalion area at Burnfort. The column was in charge of Liam Lynch. Ernie O'Malley was Training Officer. The members of this column were, as far as I can remember:-

Liam Lynch

Paddy McCarthy (Mallow)

Ernie O'Malley

Owen Harold (do)

Mick Sullivan (Meelin)

Paddy O'Brien (Liscarrol)

Tom Coughlan (Charleville)

Dan Brown (Meelin)

Dan Shannick (Castletownroche)

George Power (Fermoy)

Jerry Kiely (Tipperary)

Paddy McCarthy (Meelin)

Paddy Healy (Millstreet)

Sean Healy (do.)

The members of the column were billeted in the townlands of ISLAND and GREENHILL.

After undergoing an intensive course of training in arms drill and having had several lectures on various aspects of military operations from the Training Officer the column took on its first job on September 28th, 1920, when it captured Mallow Military Barracks. The idea that this post could be taken was first mentioned to Owen Harold (Vice O/C. Mallow Battalion) by Dick Willis who was employed as a painter in the barracks. He was so enthusiastic about the prospects of success that he convinced Harold that the barracks was there for the taking. Harold then reported to me as his O/C. and we both discussed the matter with Liam Lynch. This discussion took place some time about the middle of September. On the following Sunday a meeting of the Brigade Staff

together with the O/C. Mallow Battalion (witness), Owen Harold, Dick Willis and Ernie O'Malley was held at Sheehan's, Mourne Abbey. Dick Willis was closely questioned as to the lay-out of the barracks and the movements of enemy troops. All concerned were warned not to mention the matter to anybody, while I escorted Liam Lynch and Ernie O'Malley into Mallow that night to scout the position and ascertain the location of the various enemy posts. A few more meetings were held to discuss the plans for the attack.

Eventually on the evening of September 27th, 1920 final arrangements for the raid were completed and all instructions were issued to the officers in charge of the various Sections. This meeting which was held at Tadg Looney's, Island, continued well into the night. As O/C. of the Mallow battalion I was made responsible for:-

- (1) cutting communications at appropriate times and places;
- (2) blocking roads where necessary;
- (3) Securing transport;
- (4) Removing any captured material to a safe dumping ground.

At approximately 10 p.m. I left the meeting at ISLAND in company with the Battalion Vice O/C. (Owen Harold). We proceeded across country to Analeentha where we arranged for the mobilisation of the local Company. It was necessary, of course, to send messengers to do this as no member of the Company was aware of the pending activity. Owen Harold remained at Analeentha while I proceeded to Lombardstown Company area where I contacted the Company O/C. (Ned Murphy). I gave him instructions in writing as to the action to be taken by his Unit and also by the Two-Pot House section of

same. These instructions were:-

- (1) to arrange for the blocking of the roads in the area in the event of a successful raid (this work was intended to hinder the pursuit of our transport by the enemy if and when, we captured the war materials in the barracks);
- (2) to commandeer the motor car of Dr. Ryan, M.O. Glantane and have same available at approximately 7 A.m.;
- (3) to have a man with a cycle available in the vicinity of Mallow Military Barracks at 9 a.m. This man would be sent with news of the success or otherwise of the raid so that the work of felling the trees would be as near complete as possible by the time the cars conveying the captured material passed through his area.

I then returned to Analeentha where Owen Harold had assembled a number of members of the local Company. We then proceeded to the house of Captain Horne - a retired British Army Officer - where we seized a motor car leaving Captain Horne and the members of his household under guard. left for Glantane in Horne's car. It was driven by Paddy Healy and we were accompanied by Seán Healy who was to drive Dr. Ryan's car which was to be made available by the Lombardstown Company under Ned Murphy. The remaining members of the Analeentha party were taken by Owen Harold (Battalion Vice O/C.) to the Pike outside Mallow on the main Cork-Mallow Here they set about making arrangements to block the road. roads in this area. This party were also responsible for cutting the telegraph wires on the railway at the Killarney junction.

When I reached Glantane with the second driver

(Sean Healy) Dr. Ryan's car was available. We then proceeded in the two cars (Dr. Ryan's and Captain Horne's) to the Newberry road leading to Longfields Bridge. We parked the cars here and waited until it was time to move into Mallow. I should have mentioned that a third car was taken by Leo O'Callaghan from "Yank" Walsh's. Goold's Hill.

About 8.30 a.m. I left Newberry Road with the cars driven by Seán and Paddy Healy and drove into Beecher St., Mallow, where we arrived about 8.50 a.m. We halted the cars in Beecher Street and awaited the signal to move in on the barracks. One of the cars (that driven by Paddy Healy) was so placed that the driver was in a position to observe a signal from the military barracks while the second car, driven by Seán Healy, was in a position to accept a relayed signal Leo O'Callaghan's car was parked in the from the first car. vicinity and moved in with the others. When the cars were in position I rambled aimlessly towards the barrack gate. within a short distance of the barrack when I heard the first I immediately despatched the "runners" with instructions to the outposts to proceed with the cutting of the trees. Just as I reached the barrack gate Liam Lynch signalled to me to bring along the cars. I transmitted the signal to Paddy Healy. All cars then moved in and all military stores in the Barracks were loaded into the three I entered the car driven by Leo O'Callaghan and we left the barracks followed by the other cars, one of which, in addition to the driver, carried a volunteer who would report back to the Brigade Column O/C. when the captured stores had been safely stowed away.

The three cars proceeded along the Navigation Road

(main Mallow-Killarney) across Longfields Bridge, through Dromahane and Beeing to Clashabhuide. We unloaded the material on Leo O'Callaghan's Buick car at an old disused house on the roadside and I then proceeded in this car to Ahadillane Creamery where I found a number of volunteers also one of the Company Officers - Jerry Hanlon. about a dozen men from the creamery to where we had left the arms, while a number of others followed on foot. The captured stores had by this time been removed from the other cars. work of dumping the captured material was then left in the hands of Jerry Hanlon and his volunteers while Dr. Ryan's car was returned to Glantane by Sean Healy. "Yank" Walsh's car was taken away by Leo O'Callaghan, while I accompanied Paddy Healy in Captain Horne's car into the Millstreet area. car was then removed by some other volunteers of the Millstreet battalion into Macroom area in Cork I. Brigade.

When we had disposed of the car we proceeded to Millstreet on foot where we made contact with Fr. Joe Breen and Fr. Brennan (I think). Paddy Healy described the raid to the two priests and they were very pleased with the results. At this stage I was rather annoyed at the turn events had I had not intended to leave my own area but as Paddy Healy did not know the roads in the Mallow area I had to escort him into his own district. In any event we moved back next day to Lahakineen. We were driven back on a horse and side-car by the steward at Drishane Convent (McCarthy was his name I think). When we reached Lahakineen we met some member's of the Ahadillane and Analeentha Companies who had just completed checking the captured stores. Scouts and outposts had been posted by the local Company Officers while the checking and examination had been going on.

Shortly after our arrival at Lahakineen the Brigade O/C. (Liam Lynch) and Ernie O'Malley with a number of the Brigade Column arrived. When they had examined the captured stores they decided to remove the whole lot that evening to Creggan, Lombardstown. This move was made under the control of the Brigade column.

As far as I can recollect the stores captured in this raid on Mallow Military Barracks were:-

27 Rifles

Verey light pistols

2 Hotchkiss Guns

Lances, bayonets

1 Revolver

Bandoliers

Some thousands of rounds of ammunition.

Some two hundred men from my battalion (Mallow) were engaged in various duties in connection with this job. They were drawn from the following companies: Analeentha, Ahadillane, Burnfort, Lombardstown, Mourne Abbey, Mallow, Two-Pot House and Ballyclough.

On the day following the removal of the stores to Creggane, Dan O'Donovan ("Sando"), Mick Bowles, Paddy Barry and Jim Grey of Cork I. Brigade arrived at my home at Lahaki'neen. They had heard of the success of the raid and were anxious to see the captured stores especially the Hotchkiss Guns. I escorted this party to Creggane, Lombardstown where we made contact with the Brigade Column. I think that on this occasion Mick Bowles was the first to show how the Hotchkiss Gun worked.

On the second night following the raid the Brigade Column returned to Mourne Abbey area and in conjunction with

members of the local companies a number of parties were placed in selected ambush positions as it was anticipated that the British forces in Mallow would visit the area to carry out reprisals. Liam Lynch with about 5 members of the column and one or two locals took up a position near the Railway Station at Mourne Abbey. A second party under Ernie O'Malley were in ambush in the neighbourhood of Mourne Abbey Creamery, while I had a party of about 7 locals armed with shotguns in position in the vicinity of my own home at Lahakineen. Although all parties remained in position throughout the night no enemy forces appeared. All members of my party withdrew to their homes about 5 a.m. those with me at Lahakineen were: - Con Crean, Jack McCarthy, Paddy Donovan, Donal McCarthy, Paddy Buckley, Jack Looney.

I returned to my own battalion area on the instructions of the Brigade O/C. (Liam Lynch) and I carried on my normal administrative activities until I was arrested in a sudden sweep by a large party of military on October 28th I was taken to Mallow, then to Buttevant where I was kept for a few days when I was removed to the Military Detention Barracks, Cork. I remained here until June, 1921, when I was removed to Cork Gaol for one week before being interned in Spike Island Internment Camp. I was later removed to Maryboro' whence I was released on 8/12/1921 following signing of the Anglo Irish Treaty.

My rank at the Truce was - Battalion O/C., Mallow. The strength of the battalion was - 550.

11th May 1955.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21